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OCI NO. 1516
COPY NO. 10

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
21 January 1954

PRE-BERLIN CONFERENCE DEVELOPMENTS - VII

Summary of possible Soviet position at Berlin passes censors: Soviet censors passed an Associated Press dispatch from Moscow which described the probable Soviet position at the Berlin conference as follows: (1) unalterable opposition to EDC and rearmament of West Germany within the framework of Western defense; (2) opposition to internationally supervised all-German elections; (3) support for a provisional all-German government; (4) a demand for the elimination of American bases abroad; (5) rejection of security guarantees and an emphasis on the Franco-Soviet pact as a better idea for real security; and (6) support for a five-power conference and perhaps a five-power peace pact.

Ambassador Bohlen notes that the mere fact that the report passed Soviet censorship does not assure its accuracy but does lend it additional weight. He believes that the only deletions from the dispatch, references to exclusion of the United States from Europe, resulted from a Soviet desire to avoid attracting attention to this point rather than from inaccuracy of the statement.

Both diplomatic hints and Soviet propaganda have indicated that the Soviet position at the Berlin conference will follow the above lines.

Chancellor Adenauer's government stands firm against protracted four-power negotiations: According to Bonn government officials, the four-power conference in Berlin must complete its business without delay, and must end in such a manner as not to permit any popular interpretation that the conference will be reconvened. Otherwise, they declare, the EDC could under some circumstances be defeated in France.

State Dept. review completed

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Document No.	7
No Change In Class.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Declassified	
Class. Changed To:	TS S (G)
Auth.:	HR 70-2
Date:	24 July 78
By:	

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These officials therefore recommend that technical subcommittees be avoided at the conference, since such committees would either facilitate Soviet delaying tactics or bring the conference to a deadlock on technical issues. They add that if any such committees were to continue their work after the conference had been dissolved, great encouragement would be given to those circles in Europe which believe further Western defense efforts are superfluous.

There are indications that despite the attitude of the government, many West Germans desire that the conference be continued in some form in order to mitigate some of the conditions brought about by the division of Germany. Few West Germans, however, believe that progress will be made on the major questions of unity at the conference.

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USSR announces composition of Berlin delegation: Moscow radio announced that Foreign Minister Molotov will head its Berlin delegation and will be accompanied by First Deputy Minister Gromyko, Soviet ambassador to London Malik, Soviet ambassador to the United States Zarubin, Soviet ambassador to France Vinogradov, member of the collegium and head of third European division Pushkin, head of the American countries' division Sobolev, head of the Far Eastern division Fedorenko, member of the collegium and head of the press division Ilichev and other counsellors and experts.

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It may be assumed that the Soviet High Commissioners Semenov and Ilichev of Germany and Austria will also be present.

Pravda continues to urge a five-power conference:
Pravda on 19 January again stated the Soviet case for the "urgent necessity" of convening a five-power conference to lessen international tension, and claimed foreign non-Communist support of its position. In addition to pointing to the Korean political conference and the war in Indochina as international problems requiring China's participation in a foreign ministers' conference, it referred specifically to the alleged US attempt to establish bases in Pakistan. It maintained that "the anxiety of the peoples of Asia has been intensified in connection with the US attempt to draw Pakistan into a system of aggressive military blocs."

A Soviet propaganda tirade against US bases at an early stage of the Berlin conference is anticipated, and the USSR may estimate that its propaganda position regarding China's participation will be strengthened by specific references to Asian bases. The Soviet representative may hope to avoid openly opposing Western proposals on Germany and Austria which will command wide popular support by injecting demands for a five-power conference and consideration of such issues as American foreign bases, international tensions, atomic weapons prohibition, and European security. The USSR originally demanded a five-power conference as a prelude to four-power talks on Germany. It later expressed a willingness to meet with the Western foreign ministers, asserting that at that time it would raise the question of convening a five-power conference.

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